

## POEMS.

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### LINES WRITTEN ON A VISIT TO SPEYSIDE.

When tired with worldly cares and toil,  
How pleasant 'tis to stray,  
And taste the sweets that Nature spreads  
Along the banks of Spey !  
No music to my ear so dear  
As thine, soft murm'ring stream !  
The memory of it haunts my heart  
Like some forgotten dream.

Though life's young day has passed away,  
With all its fancied train  
Of boyish hopes and airy dreams,  
Yet thou art still the same.  
Oft on thy sandy banks I built  
The mimic castle high,  
And tried, like ancient Bab'lon's sons,  
To reach the vaulted sky.

But sandy castles are like those  
We build high in the air—  
They vanish like the morning mist,  
And leave our landscape bare.  
Ah ! where are now the hearts and hands  
That joined my boyish play ?  
Some on life's stream have gone to wreck,  
And some have passed away.

A few, like men, fight bravely in  
 Life's battle, sorely prest ;  
 But onward, upward, still they cry,  
 " We'll conquer ere we rest."  
 Oft to the earth they are borne down,  
 And forced to quit the field ;  
 But still aloft Hope's banner waves  
 With " Die, but never yield !"

Ye greyhaired fathers of my youth,  
 I'll meet you here no more ;  
 Just like a stream in years gone by,  
 You've reached the boundless shore.  
 Yonder, around the grey kirk walls,  
 Your final rest you take ;  
 To earthly change and busy life  
 No coming morn will wake.

The Sunday bell that tolls at morn  
 Will greet your ears no more ;  
 Alas ! no more your friends you'll meet  
 Around the old kirk door ;  
 In friendly talk no more you'll join,  
 Nor ever want to know  
 If beasts be selling cheap or dear,  
 Or grain priced high or low.

Sons of the soil ! your life was toil,  
 But softly now ye rest,  
 And sleep as soundly and as calm  
 As those in purple dressed.  
 Upon yon crumbling, moss-grown stones  
 I read your name and age,  
 With many a solemn warning text  
 Culled from the sacred page.

Your simple lives need no historic pen,  
 No brazen trumpet to rehearse your fame ;  
 Your humble virtues long will live behind,  
 Though flatt'ring record never breathe your name.

Yours were the virtues that made Scotland great—  
A frugal people and united state ;  
When tyrants rose to hurl you from your seat,  
Them back ye thrust in sure and dire defeat.

## TO MY AULD PIKE STAFF.

My auld pike staff, my trusty frien',  
 Like hand and glove we aye ha'e been ;  
 Mony a change we baith ha'e seen,  
     Since first we met ;  
 Atween us yet nae words ha'e been,  
     I'm prood to say't.

Well do I mind the April morn  
 I took you frae your parent thorn.  
 Although at times you've been the soorn  
     O' modern pride,  
 I ne'er could bide to ha'e you shorn  
     O' bark or hide.

A varnished coat ye ne'er could shaw,  
 Like sticks that come frae far awa' ;  
 Nor were ye ever busket braw  
     Wi' dangling tassel ;  
 But aye a sturdy shank could shaw,  
     To bide a brassel.

When I to kirk or market gaed,  
 You aye did help me in my need ;  
 I didna want a hic'ry reed,  
     Like strutting spark ;  
 They look nae better than a weed,  
     And dae nae wark.

Ower hills and glens I've wandered wide  
 With you aye faithful by my side ;  
 Down craigs and rocks you've been my guide,  
     And kept me right ;  
 With you I ne'er felt dashed nor fleyed  
     In darkest night.

On mony a wild-goose chase we've been,  
 When I was thoughtless, young, and green ;  
 Full forty miles we've often gane  
                   On summer's day,  
 When some famed spot was to be seen  
                   Where heroes lay.

But now auld age is come at last,  
 And all those thoughtless days are past,  
 And oh, alas ! they vanish fast,  
                   Like some sweet dream ;  
 For them I'll raise nae mournful blast,  
                   Nae poet's theme.

We count our years now by the score,  
 Our furthest journey's round the door ;  
 New scenes we'll ne'er again explore,  
                   'Mid Nature's charms ;  
 But thought of what we've seen before  
                   My old heart warms.

Thae thoughtless folks may sneer and laugh  
 At you and me, my auld pike staff,  
 We'll little heed their idle chaff,  
                   But toddle on ;  
 You'll be my friend, my auld pike staff,  
                   Till I am gone.